

3RD FIEP ASIA CONFERENCE ON PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS (ACPES 2018)

Youth Resistance Training: Are There Any Health Benefits?



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Abstract. During the 1970s and 1980s, one of the reasons that resistance training was not often recommended for children and adolescents was the presumed high risk of injury associated with this type of exercise. Since seminal attempts to address concerns surrounding prepubescent strength training, the concept of children and adolescents participating in various forms of resistance training has been of growing interest among researchers, clinicians and practitioners. There is now a compelling body of scientific evidence that supports regular participation in youth resistance training to reinforce positive health and fitness adaptations and sports performance enhancement. Appropriately designed resistance training programs may reduce sports-related injuries, and should be viewed as an essential component of preparatory training programs for aspiring young athletes. What is the most important, regular participation in a variety of physical activities that include resistance training during childhood and adolescence can support and encourage participation in physical activity as an ongoing lifestyle choice later in life. This presentation will discuss the theory and evidence linking youth resistance training and health promotion. Particular attention will be devoted to the challenges of appropriate design of youth resistance training. In addition, personal experience working with top tennis athletes will be presented.

Biography. Dr. Dario Novak received his Ph.D. in Physical Education from University of Zagreb, Croatia in 2010. Previously he completed eight grades of primary school in Hvar, Croatia. He has also completed high school in Hvar, Croatia. He enrolled at the Faculty of Kinesiology, University of Zagreb in year 2001 where he in 2005 acquired the master degree of PE. Currently, he is the Research Associate and Lecturer at the Faculty of Kinesiology University of Zagreb, Croatia. Dr. Novak's research interests lie in integrated and holistic approaches in the fields of physical activity, sports, exercise science, leisure, health, and technology to promote active living in school and the community. An editor of one book and author of over 20 publications in scientific and sports journals in English and Croatian, Dr. Novak has offered several keynote and invited presentations, and over 20 conference paper presentations mostly in Europe. He was part of Christina McHale's coaching team (best ranking #24 in the world WTA) and also part of Donna Vekic's coaching team (best ranking #62 in the world WTA and the youngest player on Top100 WTA list). Also he is as an advisor/consultant of Ivana Jorovic's coaching team (#1 in the world in ITF Juniors). In the past Dr. Novak has also worked with Borna Coric (#1 in the world in ITF Juniors) among many others. He was a postdoctoral fellow at Columbia University, New York, in 2013-14 and at Harvard University, Boston, in 2014-15.